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AUTHOR Garland, Colden; Shippy, Virginia
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ABSTRACT

Role theory provides a framework for defining and analyzing roles, role expectations, and role consensus; it conceptualizes patterns of human conduct; and it is used to describe activities of participants in interpersonal relationships. Role conflict occurs when contradictory expectations are held for the occupant of a position. Role analysis in a particular setting identifies areas of ambiguity and potential conflict. This report introduces a process, grounded in role theory, by which role expectations for mentors and interns can be identified. A method for viewing the relationships among the positions of mentor, intern, and school administrator as an interaction system is graphically displayed. When expectations are examined, each role can be seen in terms of its relationship to other roles; an assessment based on the amount of consensus that exists on role definitions can then be achieved. An activity entitled "Identifying the Mentor Teacher's Expectations for Interns, Mentor and Administrator" and an analysis guide form for identifying those roles in orientation, planning, observing, conferencing, and evaluation are included. (LL)

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**Analysis of Expectations for the Emerging Roles
in Mentor-Intern Programs**

Colden Garland

Virginia Shippy

State University College, Oneonta

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During this session, it is not our intent to present specific expectations for the roles of mentors and interns but to introduce a process by which expectations for these roles may be identified. This process is grounded in role theory, which provides a framework for defining and analyzing roles and role expectations.

Role theory, which attempts to conceptualize patterns of human conduct, is a relatively new field of study that has evolved within several of the social sciences. The first focus on the concerns of role appeared in the late 1920s and early 1930s in the studies of anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists. This interdisciplinary input has continued throughout the development of role theory as a field of study. In identifying the contributions to role theory from the various behavioral sciences, Sarbin (1954) stated that "...its variables are drawn from the studies of culture, society and personality" (p.223).

Role theory is used to describe the activities of participants in interpersonal relationships. Because the terms "role" and "role expectation" are used differently in various contexts, it is important to define clearly what is meant by those designations here.

Role Expectation: an evaluative standard applied to an occupant of a position (i.e., what an individual is expected to do in a given situation, both by himself and by others).

Role: a set of expectations applied to an occupant of a particular position.
(Garland, 1982)

Expectations may be acquired through intentional instruction and/or incidental learning and may originate from personal or vicarious experience. Biddle (1979) considered expectations to be a central focus of role theory and identified three types of expectations:

enunciations- overtly expressed expectations
conceptions- covertly held expectations
inscriptions- written expectations

Two additional elements of the role concept are consensus and conflict.

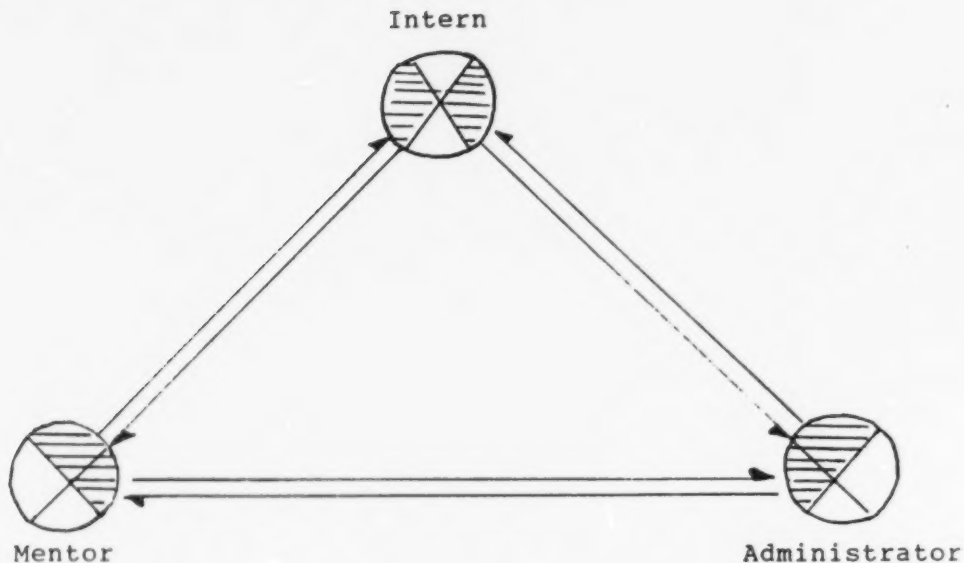
Role consensus: a state that exists when similar expectations are held for an occupant of a position.

Role conflict: a state that exists when contradictory expectations are held for an occupant of a position.

Because individuals come into situations with various backgrounds and learning, consensus regarding conceptions for roles cannot be assumed. It is important to analyze the expectations held for each role in a particular setting to identify areas of ambiguity and potential conflict. The presence of ambiguity and conflict can prevent the development of effective role relationships and result in inappropriate, non-adaptive behavior. It is for these reasons that the analysis of expectations for the roles of mentor and intern is essential.

In order to examine expectations for roles in the mentor-intern relationship, it is important to view the roles as an interaction system. The following figure (adapted from Garland, 1982) represents a way of viewing the relationships among the positions of mentor, intern and school administrator as an interaction system. The way in which the positions are related is indicated by the double arrows, which signify two-way relationships. Each position is separated into positional sectors that illustrate the relationship of one position to the other two positions. For each of the three positions, two positional sectors have been left blank to indicate that only a limited set of positions is shown in the diagram. Mentors, interns and school administrators, for example, also interact with pupils, parents, other faculty and a variety of other school personnel. In separating each position into sectors, recognition is given to the existence of these additional relationships.

Within this framework, each role can be viewed in terms of its relationship to the other roles. For example, attention can be focused on consensus between the mentor and the school administrator on the expectations they hold for the intern. Another possibility would be to examine the expectations held for mentors by the interns, school administrators and the mentors themselves. As the framework is used to analyze the expectations held for the roles of mentor, intern and school administrator, the amount of consensus that exists on role definitions can be assessed. The identification of potential conflict and ambiguity, through this analysis, can serve as the basis for planning and implementing ways of bringing about increased clarity and consensus in regard to role definitions.



System Diagram Indicating Relationships Among the Positions of Intern, Mentor, and School Administrator

It is also important to consider the concerns and anxieties expressed by those involved in mentor-intern relationships as part of the process of identifying and clarifying role expectations. A consideration of the anxieties experienced by interns prior to their first year of teaching, for example, may suggest expectations on which the mentor will want to focus initially to increase the intern's feeling of security. Similarly, knowing the concerns of administrators and other mentor teachers may help mentors identify areas in which they will want to seek clarification regarding expectations for their roles and that of the school administrator.

Activity In order to experience identifying and analyzing role expectations, list on the accompanying Analysis Guide, in the column provided, the expectations you would have, as a mentor, for an intern with whom you are working. As you list each expectation for the intern, attempt to identify the corresponding expectations for mentor and administrator. Analyze the expectations identified for each role by responding to the following questions:

1. Do the expectations for each role clearly define the desired behaviors?
2. Do the expectations address the anxieties that the role occupants may have initially?
3. Do these initial expectations define the role sufficiently, without appearing to be overwhelming?
4. Do the expectations reflect potential conflict among the three roles?

Listed below are examples of possible expectations for interns, mentors and administrators in the area of planning.

Identifying the Mentor Teacher's Expectations for the
Roles of Intern, Mentor and Administrator

<u>Area</u>	<u>Intern</u>	<u>Mentor</u>	<u>Administrator</u>
Planning	Develop written lessons.	Share format for lesson planning.	Review plans.
	Discuss plans with mentor and revise if necessary.	Review lesson plans and discuss suitability with intern.	Document intern's progress in planning.
	Plan unit independently.	Provide resources and/or assist in locating materials.	Assess appropriateness of unit within grade level curriculum

Analysis Guide

Identifying the Mentor Teacher's Expectations for the
Roles of Intern, Mentor and School Administrator

Area	<u>Mentor</u>	<u>Intern</u>	<u>Administrator</u>
Orientation			
Planning			
Observing			
Conferencing			
Evaluation			

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